

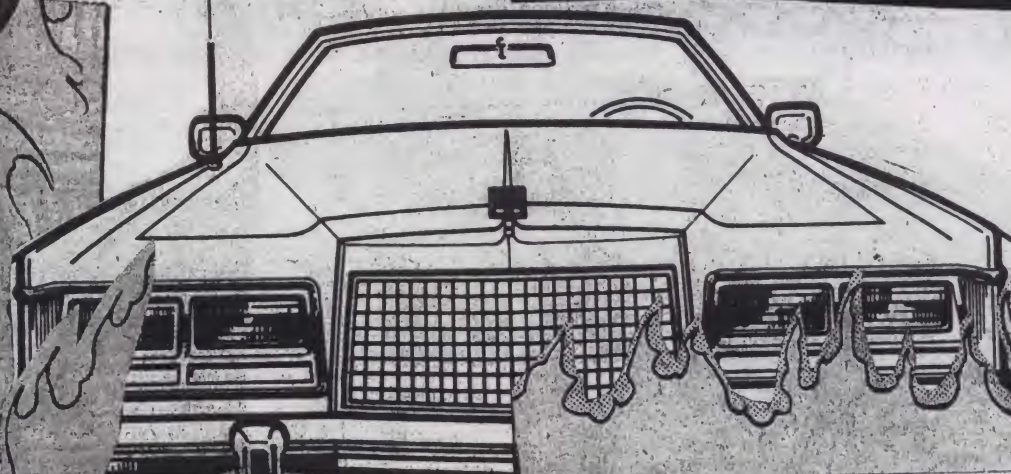


TRANARCHY

[Ev Kronfeld]



WORD...FUN."



BURNS AWAY

What...Americans prize most:



CASE

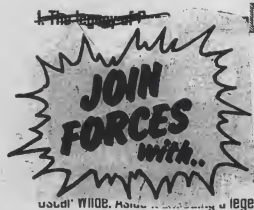
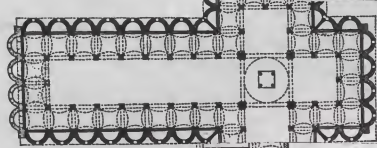
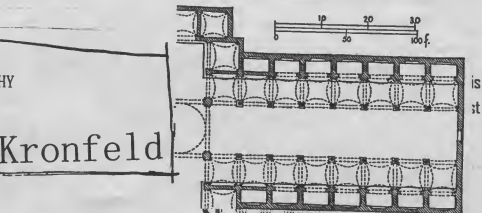
These articles originally appeared on itsgoingdown.org.

TRANARCHY

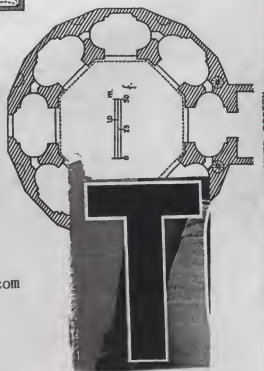
by

Ev Kronfeld

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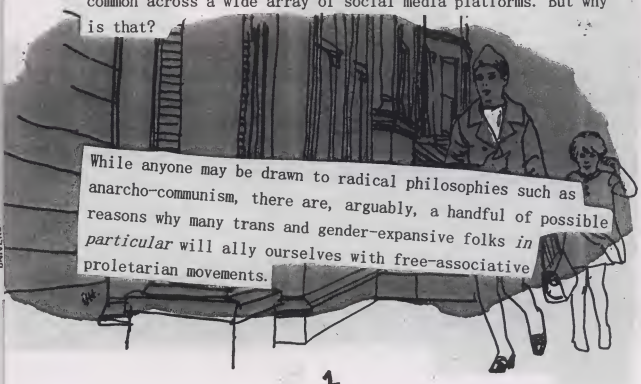


AN INTRODUCTION: Why Trans Culture Is Attracted to Revolution

As a transgender woman, my most treasured daily ritual (obviously *after* binging on all the phytoestrogen-packed soy product I can get my mitts on) would have to be jumping onto Reddit and diving into the grandest, most lovely page known to earth: [r/traaaaaaaannnnnnnnnnns](https://www.reddit.com/r/traaaaaaaannnnnnnnnnns).

On this popular subreddit of trans-related memes and whatnot, you'll find a good amount of posts which adopt the aesthetics and sentiments of left-wing politics. This includes references to trans cat-girls overthrowing the State, fashionable anarchist imagery, comics that frolic with Marxian agitprop, and so on.

Obviously the internet is not the only vehicle for the radicalization of young trans people, but from my perspective, the online arena stands out as the most potent and accessible platform with which subversion can be spread. And anyone with intimate experience in the online trans community knows that this is *not* just a Reddit thing - it is common across a wide array of social media platforms. But why is that?



While anyone may be drawn to radical philosophies such as anarcho-communism, there are, arguably, a handful of possible reasons why many trans and gender-expansive folks in particular will ally ourselves with free-associative proletarian movements.

1. The legacy of Queer Anarchism

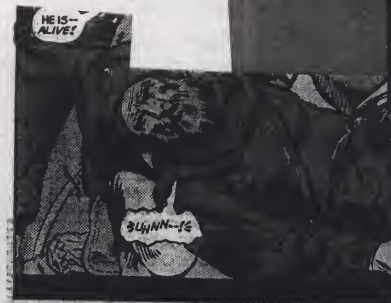
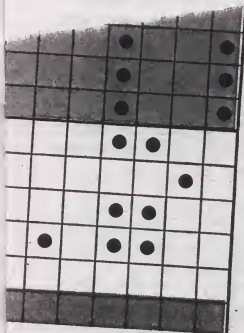
It actually makes a lot of sense that anarchism seems to be gaining traction in contemporary trans circles, given the long history of queer empowerment being embedded in anarchist struggles.

The best example of this, if you ask me, is in the writing of the dynamic Irish writer Oscar Wilde. Aside from being a legendary playwright and poet, as well as a victim of homophobic imprisonment, Wilde famously employed the principles of collectivist anarchism.

In his famous Kropotkin-inspired essay *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* (1891), he wrote with eloquence, vigor and wit about the crushing weight of capital; the society Wilde wished to foster would be rooted in anti-authoritarian Socialism, which would "relieve us from that sordid necessity of living for others which, in the present condition of things, presses so hardly upon almost everybody."

A queer artist's love for anarchism seems incredibly sensible; the liberation of sex, identity, and expression has long felt right in line with overall socio-economic liberation.

What is also important to note is that this concept has frequently manifested in direct action. The Queer Liberation movement was sparked by the 1969 Stonewall riots, which involved patrons of the New York gay bar Stonewall Inn (many



WE HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE,
AND IT IS US.

of whom were trans women of color such as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha Johnson) responding to a police raid of the space with spontaneous violent resistance. An international wave of radical queer demonstration erupted from this event - and while plenty of currents fizzled out over the years, as has been the case for many related countercultural movements of the '60s and '70s, a number of contemporary militant groups draw inspiration from this legacy of queer radicalism.

Though they've since faded, a few years back, there existed a network of insurrectionary American queer anarchist cells known as *Bash Back!* This was described by Fray Baroque as "not just a group or organization, but a militant tendency on the part of queer individuals," which consisted of "bar fights, outrunning lynch mobs, glamdazification, attacking the homes of heterosexist murderers, outright chaos, alleged lootings, theory discussions, self-defense tips, social gatherings, beatdowns, the acquisition of large quantities of pepper spray, and attempts at sexual liberation."

So now that more and more folks who don't conform to cisnormativity are proudly, openly congregating, there exists a clear precedent for us to adopt these radical values.

2. Modern obstacles to trans existence

In the United States, from 2013 to 2018, at least 128 trans people were victims of fatal transphobic violence, predominantly trans women of color; the killing of trans people is a pressing disaster, with law enforcement often failing to properly identify victims. And this isn't just an

issue of off-hand violent men - the abuse against trans people can be greatly enabled by those in places of power.

Jair Bolsonaro, the recently-elected president of Brazil. (where more trans folks are killed than any other nation), has spoken openly about his hatred of LGBTQ citizens, once saying that if a parent perceives their child to be behaving "a little gay," that they should "take a whip and ... change their behavior." Further, Donald Trump (who has praised Bolsonaro's political ascension) has overseen the attempted banning of trans people from the military, attacks on the rights of trans students and prisoners, an erasure of trans identity in an HHS memo, and the disenfranchisement of trans sex workers through the SEXTA-FOSTA acts. While there are a plethora of factors present in the growing prevalence of transphobic violence, it seems clear that oppression and lack of care from the State plays a substantial role.

So how does this relate to trans affection for anarchism? Well, our community is in danger, and we need to defend ourselves.

Ruling-class power structures put pressure on the downtrodden to be civil with those who would like to see us cut out of society. Anarchism, as an ideology of liberation, rejects this bullshit, and encourages the persecuted to aggressively organize against their persecutors. Look around - fascists and their helpers are committing terror and taking political power, and trans people are one of their major targets. We can't afford *not* to take a revolutionary angle.



3. The adversarial nature of Capital and hierarchy

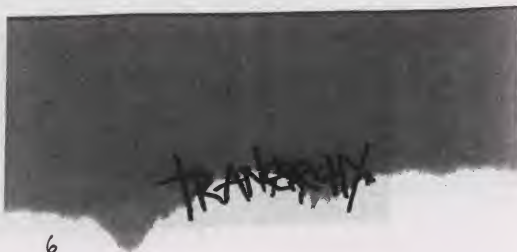
The things which anarchism aim to break down are, arguably, things that are especially harmful to trans people.

Rigidity is inherent in the pernicious hierarchies of capital, and the State which protects Capital; the sharp norms and values which are produced by a centralized and privatized atmosphere tend to exclude those who don't adhere to the roles of their assigned sex, or dismiss the gender binary. Many have seen that our worth is determined primarily by our ability to feed machines; people are cast off whenever we fail to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie.

And this outlook spreads to every corner of life, including gender. If you fall outside the narrow confines of cismasculinity and cisfemininity, then you are lesser and fail to serve the machine of "family values," or whatever they want to call it.

Defiant anarchists not only fail to feed the machines of capital and the State, they actively work to destroy them. And *defiant* trans people not only fail to serve the machines of cisnormativity, they actively work to destroy them.

These struggles are essentially shared.



4. The aesthetic of Revolution

This is quite simple: the disruption of the State, and the construction of a brave new humanity, is kinda sexy. As much as the powerful might try to appropriate the style of anarchism, the substance of bona fide Revolution can't be shallowly replicated.

So in short, *anarchy is punk rock*...and trans people can definitely get behind that.



The Blue-Pink-White Scare: How Right-Wing Media Drives Transphobic Panic

To be transgender is to be a menace in the eyes of modern reactionaries; to them, we have become more of a vague idea than an actual community. But what is this idea they have?

It seems like if you look at *Fox News*, or *InfoWars*, or any other far-right media outlet, you will see trans people characterized as one or more of the following: the Clown, the Predator, or the Child.

The Clown is the wild Social Justice loon, an irrational postmodernist who shouldn't be respected. The Predator is rabidly-violent, always after bloody chaos, and never the slightest bit civil. The Child is just naive and juvenile, and as such, shouldn't be taken seriously.

If a trans academic debates a conservative pundit, and attempts to explain why cis people should use the correct pronouns for gender-funky folks, they will probably be

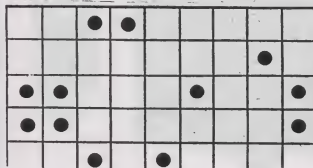
painted as the Clown; and if they begin to show emotion, or seem at all aggressive, they might additionally be portrayed as the Predator. Whether or not a trans person is depicted as the Child will often depend on age, experience, and disposition - this tends to apply to younger trans people, especially those who begin to exhibit a desire for dignity at school and at home. You will often see this role evoked whenever discussions of, say, youth hormone treatment occur.

Whether we are presented as screwy, hostile, and/or confused, it's all washed in fear.

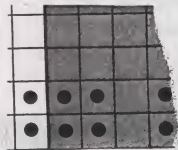
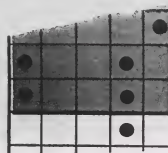
This is the same brand of fear that riled up homophobes in the lead-up to the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision to end prohibition of gay marriage. People went on TV and wrote sprawling apocalyptic thinkpieces to defend 'natural marriage' against what they perceived as a plot to turn kids gay and throw Christians in the gulag.

In an op-ed from October 2014, Mike Huckabee asserted that as a society, "...we stomp all over the religious convictions of Christians like the Knapps of C'our deLane, Oregon [sic] ... They decline to conduct same sex weddings and like Melissa Klein, the cake maker, like Elaine's Photography in New Mexico, and numerous other businesses, they are bullied out of business because the government has decided to target Christians and Jews who believe the same Bible Barak [sic] Obama claimed to believe in 2008."

Here, Huckabee describes various instances wherein business-owners unlawfully discriminated against their fellow people



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and acted like victims when they received a bit of legal and social pushback. This state of affairs is so frightening to him because he thinks gay people should be even more dehumanized and thought (as many did) that *Obergefell v. Hodges* would lead to the destruction of 'everything we hold dear' (ie, 'the country,' 'Judeo-Christian values,' and other dog-whistles for white-supremacist bullshit). These people never cared one bit about 'government tyranny' or anything like that; they certainly didn't go on to mobilize around defending the J20 protesters or Chelsea Manning from prosecutorial harassment. It was always about homophobic fear mongering and a mindset of conformity.

Clearly the zeitgeist has mostly moved on from the issue of gay marriage, as everything the Right warned about never came to pass. But I think we can learn a lot about the nature of rightist propaganda from how they framed the whole matter in the years prior to 2015.

Look at how conservative pundits talked about the spectre of same-sex unions; they would constantly refer to the issue as a 'culture war,' for example. Like, constantly.

By discussing the matter with this type of language, they were able to make the fight for marriage equality ubiquitous with an 'us versus them' social conflict wherein all sides deserved equal respect. The notorious Masterpiece cakeshop baker was now a 'martyr of the culture war,' not an explicit bigot.

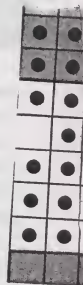
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Acting like queer people and their marginalizers were just 'two disagreeing sides' was an undoubtedly effective strategy when it came to co-opting the conversation around gay marriage, and it looks like trans people are the new target of it.

Remember when I said that trans people are usually portrayed as the Clown, the Predator, and/or the Child in right-wing media? Well that is, in essence, the second step in the maneuver to discredit trans people.

First, they frame transness as a "debate" in the first place. Just like they did with marriage equality, right-wing media enters with the presupposition that the dignity and humanity of transgender people is just some political issue which needs to be squabbled over. You see this when transphobes use phrases like "the transgender debate" to refer to conflicts between trans people and pseudo-academic bigots who feel the need to grandstand against trans identity. After that, all they have to do is stitch together a false narrative around who trans people are and what they believe; from there, they denigrate us as the Clown, the Predator, the Child. In this, they have constructed a new consensus of their own - one that sees trans people as deceptive, authoritarian, and irrational.

If someone like Zinnia Jones suggests that cis people may want to examine their prejudices surrounding romantic relationships with trans people, Tucker Carlson will spin it as supporting "mandatory transgender dating," thus making her play the role of the Clown.

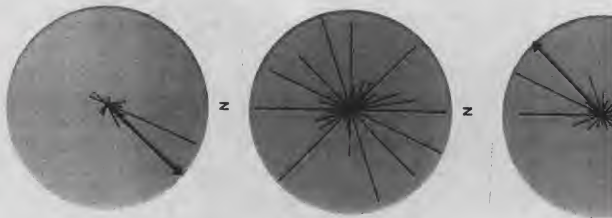


When Ben Shapiro appeared alongside reporter Zoey Tur on *Dr. Drew On Call*, he misgendered and demeaned her with the intention of stoking anger; and when she said "cut that out now, or you'll go home in an ambulance," he remarked that her reaction was "inappropriate for a political discussion," effectively painting her as the Predator for all of his 'reason'-loving fanboys.

Once again: all of this is about panic, something which right-wing media is great at creating. We are fuel for their bonfire of terror. They demean, belittle, and misrepresent transness for the purpose of perpetuating the fear which they feed off of, and it ultimately engenders their audience into treating trans people like shit.

If you consider yourself an ally of the trans community, I'm begging you: do not treat this parade of hateful, dread-peddling deceit as though it is an ideology worthy of respect and magnification.

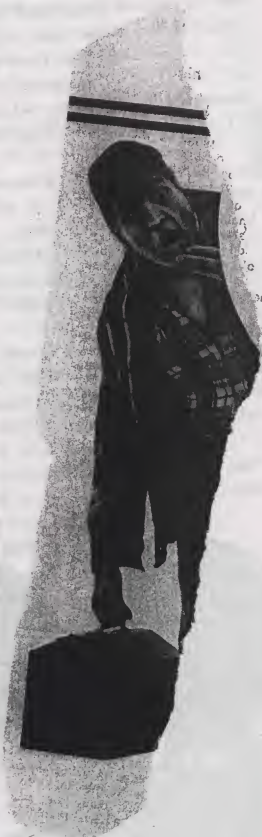
Trans people are under attack, and we will not be gaslit like this.



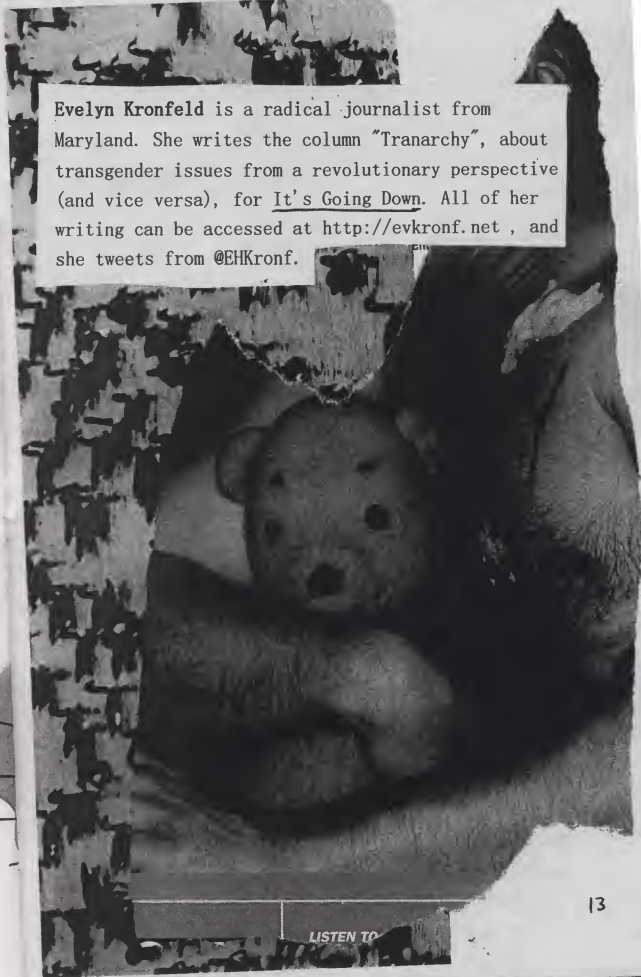
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Evelyn Kronfeld is a radical journalist from Maryland. She writes the column "Tranarchy", about transgender issues from a revolutionary perspective (and vice versa), for It's Going Down. All of her writing can be accessed at <http://evkronf.net> , and she tweets from @EHKronf.





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